

Adopt-a-High School Program Information and Sign up Form

The Adopt-a-High School program was developed to ensure that staff at eligible high schools have assistance in making sure that high school seniors apply for postsecondary financial aid programs, specifically, the Cal Grant Entitlement program. The program is especially focused on making sure postsecondary financial aid information and application assistance is available to students from low-income families and high schools with low university going rates.

The Adopt-a-High School program provides assistance to students and high school administrators through volunteers. Volunteers are either members of the California Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (CASFAA), or the California Community Colleges Student Financial Aid Administrators Association (CCCSFAAA) or have experience working with high school and college students and families in providing intersegmental financial aid information. Volunteers are given a calendar of activities to complete over approximately a 5-month period that corresponds to the filing period for college financial aid for the following academic year. Additionally, volunteers and designated high school staff are asked to provide feedback to the California Student Aid Commission (Commission) regarding the success and effectiveness of the program.

Becoming a volunteer in the Adopt-a-High School program can be a fulfilling and satisfying experience. You can help a student find his or her way to a college education, and in the spirit of community involvement, help the Commission carry out its mission to make postsecondary education financially accessible to all Californians.

Volunteer Activities for the Adopt-a- High School Program

Contact the high school and introduce yourself to the high school representative. Verify that financial aid informational activities are planned for seniors for the year. Ensure, to a reasonable extent, there is no duplication of services through programs already in place at the high school. Offer assistance, materials, etc. (Materials will be provided by the Commission.) Make sure the high school has an adequate supply of Cal Grant Entitlement Information sheets for distribution to all seniors.

GPA Verification - Verify that the high school has received its GPA Verification forms.

Check that the high school has a process in place for calculating and submitting verified GPAs to the Commission. Offer assistance in helping the high school use the GPA by diskette process. (The Commission will provide assistance to the volunteer.) Verify that seniors' calculated GPAs have been filed with the Commission.

Filing the FAFSA - Verify that the high school has received its supply of FAFSA forms and, if not, offer assistance in securing them. Check that the appropriate high school staff has access to or copies of the FAFSA video.

Check that the high school or the community provides access to PCs for seniors to use to file their FAFSAs through FAFSA on the WEB.

Follow-up with the high school contact and meet any requests for assistance. For example, staffing a parent's night, a hands-on FAFSA workshop or assisting an economics teacher with the FAFSA instructional curriculum developed by the Commission.

Complete the program survey - Provide the Commission with feedback about the program and complete the program information survey.

Helpful Questions and Answers

What if a group of co-workers or friends and I want to be volunteers for the same high school?

The Commission wants to make sure that as many eligible high schools as possible are adopted by volunteers. So each volunteer that signs up will be assigned to one high school. However, there is no restriction on the number of people a volunteer may use to help with her or his activities for the adopted school. The volunteer on record will be the contact for the high school representatives and the volunteer will be responsible for providing the services of the Adopt-a-High School program.

Can I do more than the activities listed on the calendar?

Absolutely! The activities listed on the calendar of program activities are the minimum services that the volunteer agrees to provide to the high school. Volunteers are not limited to these activities. If you have more time and ability to donate to your adopted high school, you may certainly do so. The Commission asks that information about activities and services carried out beyond the minimum requirements be disclosed to the Commission on the program evaluation sheet.

Our college already has outreach activities with some high schools. Is the Adopt-a-High School program in addition to these activities?

Yes. One goal of the program is to ensure that services already provided to the high school are not duplicated. Also, some of the existing outreach programs such as AVID or MESA, target groups of students for specific curriculum objectives such as mentoring math or science abilities, or have a significant tutorial component to them. The main objective of Adopt-a-High School volunteers is to ensure that the senior class, as a whole, has information about, and access to, the application process for postsecondary financial aid, specifically the Cal Grant Entitlement program, and to assist high school officials in meeting that goal. In addition, eligible schools were specifically chosen because the school's students have low university going rates.

Can my company or my school (college) adopt a high school or a group of high schools?

The Adopt-a-High School program requires that a specific individual be matched with each adopted high school. The individual will be responsible for completing the minimum requirements asked of the volunteers in the program. These individuals will be responsible for regular contact with the high school representatives and staff and will indirectly represent the California Student Aid Commission. Each person will also be responsible for providing non-biased, intersegmental information about financial aid programs. The Adopt-a-High School program should not be viewed as a marketing or recruitment opportunity.

I'm not a member of CASFAA or CCCSFAAA and neither is my college. Can I still adopt a high school?

The Adopt-a-High School program does not require that volunteers be members of CASFAAA or CCCSFAAA. However, they should be knowledgeable and comfortable with providing non-biased financial aid information. Volunteers should also be knowledgeable about federal and state requirements, financial aid programs, and their application requirements.

Yes, I want to adopt a high school and ensure that high school seniors have information and assistance in applying for postsecondary financial aid and the Cal Grant Entitlement program. Upon submitting this sign-up form, I agree to be a mentor to my assigned high school and provide at least the minimum activities as listed in the calendar of program activities. I also agree to provide information in a fair and impartial manner and ensure that the information is applicable to all five segments of postsecondary education in California. In addition, I agree to fill out and return the program survey document as specified in the calendar of activities.

Number and Street City Zip
(Use an address that you are reasonably sure will receive mail in a timely manner.)

Phone (evening) _____
(Area code and number)

Upon receipt of this completed form, the Commission will send confirmation of your adopted high school and a packet of information. The information packet will provide the following items: contact information for your adopted high school; a calendar of program activities for the volunteer, the Commission, and the high school; samples of postsecondary financial aid information material, and the Commission's publication order form. Questions about the Adopt-a-High School program can be directed to the Commission's Outreach and Training Division at (916) 526-8920 or contact us by e-mail at: adoptHS@csac.ca.gov.